

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 225973
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 PA-02 ISO-00 H-02
SSM-05 SAA-01 SES-02 SIG-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 SP-02
PCH-02 /076 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:RGH

APPROVED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND

PA/PRS - MR. CARTER

H - MR. FLATEN

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA/IAI - MR. KORN

NEA/ARN - MR. HOWELL

NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN

NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----131008 071353Z /44

R 062055Z SEP 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
DOD WASHDC
JCS WASHDC 0917
CIA WASHDC 0865
USICA
NSC WASHDC 0674
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

UNCLAS STATE 225973

CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - SEPTEMBER 6

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR SEPTEMBER 6,
1978. SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER III.

Q. HAVE YOU GOT ANYTHING ON -- ARE YOU GOING TO
CHARACTERIZE THE ISRAELI FLIGHTS OVER BEIRUT TODAY?

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A. I AM NOT EVEN ABLE TO CONFIRM ANY MORE THAN THE
REPORT THAT I GAVE YOU YESTERDAY FROM LEBANON, FROM --
WAS IT FROM A NEWSPAPER? NO, I DONT HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION
I CAN OFFER.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE LEBANESE SITUATION?

A. WHAT WE HAVE IS THAT HEAVY FIGHTING INVOLVING SOME
SHELLING OCCURRED BETWEEN CHRISTIAN MILITIA MEN AND SYRIAN
UNITS OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE IN TWO SUBURBS OF BEIRUT
YESTERDAY AND LAST NIGHT. CASUALTIES REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN
SMALL. AS OF NOON, BEIRUT TIME -- WHICH IS SOME TIME AGO --
THE ACTION HAD DIED DOWN TO SPORADIC SMALL ARMS FIRE. THE
SITUATION IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY IS
GENERALLY CALM, AS OF THAT REPORT.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A STATEMENT IN THE FORM OF A
QUESTION, AND THAT IS, FOR THE LAST TWO DAYS, IT SEEMS TO
ME WE HAVE JUST HEARD A TORRENT OF PERSONAL POLITICAL
IDEAS IN THE FORM OF SUPPOSED QUESTIONS AT A PRESS
BRIEFING WHICH I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF AS AN
ENORMOUS ABUSE OF WHAT PRESS BRIEFINGS ARE FOR. THEY

ARE TO ASK QUESTIONS FOR NEWS STORIES AND NOT TO PARADE
ONE'S POLITICAL OPINIONS.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK IF THERE IS NOT SOME WAY IN WHICH WE
COULD STOP PEOPLE FROM ABUSING PRESS BRIEFINGS TO MAKE
POLITICAL SPEECHES AND WASTING THE TIME OF THE REST OF THE
REPORTERS AND THE OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT?

A. I THINK THE ANSWER TO THAT IS THAT WHILE I WOULD
CLEARLY BE HAPPIEST IF ALL THE QUESTIONS WERE SHORT AND
DEALT WITH IMMEDIATE FACTUAL MATTERS THAT I HAD AT MY
HAND. AND WHILE I UNDERSTAND THAT A NUMBER OF YOU TEND TO
IRRITATE EACH OTHER FROM TIME TO TIME, THAT I AM PAID TO
BE UP HERE TO TAKE QUESTIONS AND ANSWER THEM AS BEST I
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CAN.

I WOULD ALWAYS URGE ALL OF YOU TO DO THIS AS SPEEDILY
AND TO THE POINT AS YOU CAN, AND I WOULD HOPE YOU WOULD.
I AM, HOWEVER, IN A POSITION OF BEING A SPOKESMAN FOR THE
STATE DEPARTMENT, AND IN THAT CATEGORY I GUESS WHAT I
DO IS RESPOND TO ANY KIND OF QUESTION THAT COMES ALONG.

I WOULD TRY TO SEE TO IT THAT ALL QUESTIONERS GET THEIR
DAY SO THAT ALL QUESTIONS CAN BE ANSWERED. AND IF
PEOPLE CAN KEEP WHAT THEY HAVE TO ASK SHORTER THAN
MY ANSWER WAS JUST NOW, I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY. CHRISTOPHER

NOTE BY OC/T: STATE 225973 POUCHED TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS.

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NNN

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